

WASHINGTON – Representative Spencer Bachus (AL-6) tonight invited Congress to go wild – for a good cause.

Bachus, who serves as Chairman of the Congressional Zoo and Aquarium Caucus, was the honorary host of “Party for the Planet,” a Capitol Hill reception that honored the contributions that zoos and aquariums make to environmental education and the economic lives of their communities.

Bachus said, “Sometimes it’s good to show your animal instincts. The Birmingham Zoo is an example of the important role that zoos and aquariums play for people of all ages.

It has been ranked as the top tourism site in Alabama, attracting more than 450,000 people a year.

Zoos are family places where children learn about the wonder of animal life and nature, and where adults are reminded about the imperative of habitat conservation.”

Bachus recently secured \$1.075 million in federal funds that will be used to create a safe and attractive gateway to both the Birmingham Zoo and the Botanical Gardens.

The project will eliminate hazardous traffic conditions, improve pedestrian safety, and further increase community access to the facilities.

Bachus commended Birmingham Zoo for its service to the community under President and CEO Dr. William Foster.

Tonight's reception in the Cannon House Office Building featured live displays of animals including a cheetah, Chinese alligator, python, and a pink spoonbill that flew to Congressman Bachus' outstretched arms. The animals were under the care and direction of Julie Scardina, the Animal Ambassador for SeaWorld, Busch Gardens, and Discovery Cove.

Scardina is known for her appearances on The Tonight Show With Jay Leno.

The Congressional Zoo and Aquarium Caucus provides a bipartisan forum for Members of Congress to discuss issues affecting zoos and aquariums, their communities, and the cause of conservation in general.

Bachus said it brings an exotic type of lobbyist to Washington.

“A cheetah is able to make a point very persuasively,” Bachus quipped.

